



Heart of the City Health Center  
Administration

100 Cherry Street SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
616.965.8200  
cherryhealth.org

**TO:** THE HONORABLE JULIE CALLEY  
**SUBJECT:** SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 541  
**DATE:** OCTOBER 2, 2018

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Representative Calley,

I am writing you today requesting your support for Senate Bill 541, legislation to introduce dental therapists in Michigan. Cherry Health serves more than 68,000 residents throughout Kent, Montcalm, and Barry counties. In 2017, Cherry Health provided 86,616 dental appointments to 35,599 patients. Despite our robust dental clinic operations, we still have more patients than we can provide care and we need options to increase our dental workforce capacity, including the option to expanding our practice through utilizing dental therapists. According to our recent survey, there are approximately 245,168 low income patients, who have unmet dental needs across 9 counties in Michigan.

Cherry Health is encouraged that the House Committee on Health Policy is exploring options to address the access to oral health care issue and Senate Bill 541 is a critical step to improve access to dental care and create a true dental home for hundreds of thousands of Michiganders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tasha Blackmon".

Tasha Blackmon  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cherry Health